Year	Production (In million tonnes)		Productivity (In tonnes)	
	U/G	O/C	U/G	O/C
1975-76	16.88	3.21	0.54	0.77
1980-81	15.16	6.26	0.49	1.14
1990-91	12.29	14.41	0.45	1.91
1997-98	10.18	28.73	0.48	2.67

(b) The employment strength and investment (Capital Expenditure) in BCCL for the same period are as under:

Year	Employment (As on 1st April)	Investment (Rs. in crores) (Capital expenditure)
1975-76	176,145	35.96
1980-81	168,835	65.85
1990-91	167,469	237.37
1997-98	142,436	173.09

(c) The following steps have been taken to improve working in underground mines:-

(i) Rationalisation of manpower and control of manpower.

(ii) Training of unskilled and skilled manpower to meet the shortage of skilled personnel.

(iii) Training of female workers as support workforce at surface/opencast mines with a view to replace the male workers working at surface/opencast mines for underground jobs.

(iv) Control of absenteeism through surprise check and other measures.

(v) Curtailment of lead and lift.

(vi) Progressive introduction of steel support including roof bolting/roof stitching at the working faces in development districts.

(d) The extractable coal reserve in underground blocks and opencast blocks as on 1.4.1996 after making allowance for reserves blocked under various surface constraints and loss in extraction is as under:

	(In million tonnes)
(i) Opencast block	2459
(ii) Underground block	1150
TOTAL :	3609

Female employees in BCCL

2761. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) number of female employees in BCCL on 1st May, 1973 and 1st May, 1978;

(b) whether it is a policy in BCCL to discourage female employment despite increase in open cast mining and it being against the spirit of Constitution; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) As reported by Coal India Limited, bifurcated manpower of male and female employees in BCCL as on 1.5.1973 is not available. However, the number of female employees in Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) as on 1.12.1973 and 1.5.1978 are as under:—

Female employees as on	
1.12.1973 (earliest available date)	1.5.1978
16,368	19,118

(b) There is no such policy in BCCL to discourage female employment.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to (b) above.

Losses in Singareni Coalfields Limited

2762. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Singareni Coalfields have suffered losses during the last two years; if so, the losses suffered during the year 1997 and so far in the current year;

(b) the causes of the loss; and

(c) the measures Government have taken/propose to take to cut losses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) to (c) The losses incurred by Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) during the years 1995-96 and 1996-97 are Rs. 190.81 crores and Rs. 246.95 crores, respectively.

The audited annual accounts of SCCL for the year 1997-98 will be available only in September.

The main reasons for losses incurred by SCCL are:

(i) Low productivity particularly in opencast mines and high cost of production mainly because of high stripping ratio in opencast mines.

(ii) Limited possibility of going in for more open-cast mines on account of lack of opencastable reserve.

(iii) Adverse law and order situation and intermittent strikes and industrial indiscipline causing substantial production losses almost every year.

(iv) High interest burden on account of skewed debt-equity ratio.

The Government have taken the following measures to reduce the losses in SCCL:

(i) Deregulation of prices of A, B & C grades of non-coking coal with effect from 22.3.96 and deregulation of the pricing of D grade of non-coking coal with effect from 12.3.97.

(ii) Allowing SCCL to revise the prices of E, F & G grades of non-coking coal keeping in view the escalation formula prescribed in 1987 report of BICP.

(iii) Investment of Rs. 458.00 crorres as equity (including conversion of loan amounting to Rs. 402 crores) during the VIII Plan period.

(iv) Extension of a loan of Rs. 149.52 crores during VIII Plan period.

(v) Extension of bilateral credit of Rs. 403.84 crores during VIII Plan period.